

No. 4.

THE FREETHINKER'S TEXT-BOOK.

PART I.

RELIGION: WHAT AND WHY?

OR, GOD = X.

BY C. BRADLAUGH.

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BY

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between the order, the method, and the plan of nature, and what we see when we watch a mechanician working according to a plan, to produce a designed result. The only real parallel would be our perception by sense of a world slowly evolving from chaos, according to a plan previously foreseen. From the product you are at liberty to infer a producer only after having seen a similar product formerly produced. But the product which supplies the basis of this argument is unique and unparalleled; 'a singular effect,' in the language of Hume, whose reasoning on this point has never been successfully assailed. And the main difficulty which confronts the Theist, and which Theism essays to remove, is precisely that which the consideration of design does not touch—viz., the origin, and not the arrangement, of the universe. The teleological analogy is, therefore, worthless. There is no parallel, we repeat, between the process of manufacture and product of creation, between the act of a carpenter working with his tools to construct a cabinet and the evolution of life in nature. On the contrary, there are many marked and sharply-defined contrasts between them. In the latter case there is fixed and ordered regularity, no deviation from law; in the former, contingency enters, and often alters and mars, the work. Again, the artificer simply uses the materials which he finds lying to hand in nature. He *detaches* them from their natural connections. He arranges them in a special fashion. But in nature, in the successive evolution of her organisms, there is no detachment, no displacement, no interference, or isolation. All things are linked together. Every atom is dependent on every other atom, while the organisms seem to grow and develop 'after their kind' by some vital force, but by no manipulation similar to the architect's or builder's work. And yet, again, in the one case the purpose is comprehensible. The end is foreseen from the beginning. We know what the mechanician desires to effect; but in the other case we have no clue to the 'thought' of the architect. Who will presume to say that he has adequately followed the purposes of nature in the adjustment of her phenomena to one another? But (3) the only valid inference from the phenomena of design would be that of a phenomenal first cause. The inference of a personal divine agent or substance, from the observation of the mechanism of the universe, is invalid. What link connects the traces of mind which are [said to be] discernible in nature with

an agent who produced them? There is no such like. And thus the divine personality remains unattested. The same may be said of the divine unity. Why should we rest in our inductive inference of one designer from the [alleged] phenomena of design, when these are [claimed to be] so varied and so complex? Or grant that in all we observe a subtle and pervading unity is found, and as a consequence all existing arrangements point to one designer, why may not that designer have been at some remote period himself designed? And so on *ad infinitum* (see on this 'Paley Refuted in his Own Words,' by George Jacob Holyoake; and, *per contrâ*, 'Theism,' by John Orr).

"But, in the second place, not only is the argument defective (admitting its validity as far as it goes), even partial validity cannot be conceded to it. The phenomena of design not only limit us to a finite designer, not only fail to lead us to the originator of the world, or to a personal first cause, but they confine us within the network of observed designs, and do not warrant faith in a being detached from, or independent of, these designs, and therefore able to modify them with a boundless reserve of power. These designs only suggest mechanical agency working in fixed forms according to prescribed law. In other words, the phenomena of the universe, which distantly resemble the operations of man, do not in the least suggest an agent exterior to themselves. We are not intellectually constrained to ascribe the arrangement of means to ends in nature to anything supra-mundane." Why may not the phenomena of the universe be the mere endless evolution of the universe itself? "But if the inference from design is valid at all, it must be valid everywhere; all the phenomena of the world must yield it equally. No part of the universe is better made than any other part. Every phenomenon is adjusted to every other phenomenon nearly, or remotely, as means to ends. Therefore, if the few phenomena, which our teleologists single out from the many, are a valid index to the character of the source whence they have proceeded, everything that exists must find its counterpart in the divine nature. If we are at liberty to infer an Archetype above, from the traces of mind beneath, must not the phenomena of moral evil and sin be on the same principle carried upwards by analogy? a procedure which would destroy the notion of Deity which the teleologists advocate. If we are at liberty to conclude that a few phenomena, which

seem to us designed, proceed from and find their counterpart in God, reason must be shown why we should select a few and pass over other phenomena of the universe. In other words, if the constructor of the universe designed one result from the agency which he has established, must he not have designed all the results that actually emerge? and if the character of the architect be legitimately deduced from one or a few designs, must we not take all the phenomena which exist to help out our idea of his character? Look, then, at these phenomena as a whole. Consider the elaborate contrivances for inflicting pain, and the apparatus so exquisitely adjusted to produce a wholesale carnage of the animal tribes. They have existed from the very dawn of geologic time. The whole world teems with the proofs of such intended carnage. Every organism has parasites which prey upon it; and not only do the superior tribes feed upon the inferior (the less yielding to the greater), but the inferior prey at the very same time no less remorselessly upon the superior. If, therefore, the inference of benevolence be valid, the inference of malevolence is at least equally valid: and as equal and opposite the one notion destroys the other" (*British Quarterly Review*, No. cvii., p. 52).

Victor Cousin, in his 25th Lecture ("History of Modern Philosophy," pp. 418 to 426), examining Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," takes occasion to sum up, from a Theistic point of view, the various arguments for the existence of God; but all his points having been already touched on here, it is unnecessary to do more than to refer the student to him.

We come now to the fourth division of our subject (see page 121). Sir William Hamilton says ("Discussions on Philosophy," p. 623): "The only valid arguments for the existence of a God and for the immortality of the human soul rest on the ground of man's moral nature." It is with a phase of this argument that Kant's name is especially associated. Immanuel Kant was born at Königsberg, 22nd April, 1724, died 12th February, 1804. Unquestionably one of the greatest thinkers of the eighteenth century, Kant is very differently judged by opposing readers. His words are difficult to comprehend, partly because of his special terminology, and partly because his style is extremely involved. Kant was a Theist, but his notions of future life seem occasionally to savour of the doctrine of

metempsychosis. Victor Cousin says that, "after having commenced by a little idealism, Kant ends in Scepticism" ("History of Modern Philosophy," vol. i., p. 132); and it is affirmed that, questioned towards the close of his life as to his ideas on a future state, the Prussian philosopher responded, "I have no notion of a future state" ("Biographie Universelle," vol. vii., p. 92). But see on this "Life and Works of Kant," by A. G. Henderson, p. liii., introduction to Victor Cousin's "Lectures on the Philosophy of Kant." De Quincey rather recklessly declares of Kant that "he exulted in the prospect of our absolute and ultimate annihilation; that he planted his glory in the grave, and was ambitious of rotting for ever."

Before stating the ethico-theological argument, it will be well to show how Kant deals with the first and second divisions of the Theistic evidences ("Philosophy of Kant," by Victor Cousin, translated by A. G. Henderson, p. 120):

"Speculative reason has but three species of arguments to demonstrate the existence of God; Kant calls them *physico-theological*, *cosmological*, and *ontological*.

"The two first set out from experience; in the *physico-theological* proof we examine the order and beauty of the world, and establish the existence of God as an explanation of this order and beauty." [We have already fully stated the objections both to the "order and beauty" assumed, and the conclusion sought to be deduced from this alleged order and beauty, and in restating, in Cousin's words, the three classes of arguments, we need only ask the reader to bear this in mind.] "In the *cosmological* proof we take no account of the harmony revealed to us by experience; it is sufficient that this experience should attest any contingent existence to enable us to pass from this contingent existence to that of an existence absolutely necessary. Finally, in the third proof, the *ontological*, we throw aside all experience, and conclude from the *idea* of perfect being to its existence.

"Kant begins by discussing the *ontological* proof, because, according to him, the two others rest upon this one.

"This proof is no other than that of St. Anselm. It was introduced into modern philosophy by Descartes, and the last form under which it appears was given to it by Leibnitz. It is under this form that Kant considers it, and undertakes to refute it; perfect being contains all reality, and it is admitted that such a being is possible—that is to say, that

its existence implies no contradiction. Now, all reality supposes existence. There is therefore a thing possible, in the concept of which is comprised existence. If this thing be denied, the possibility of its existence is also denied, which is contradictory to the preceding. You see here Leibnitz's argument, viz., God is, if he is possible, since his possibility—that is to say, his very essence—carries with it his existence; and thus to admit it as possible, and not, at the same time, to admit it as existing, is a contradiction. Kant attacks this argument in the following manner:—First, we must carefully distinguish between logical necessity, or that species of necessity which connects together an attribute with its subject, with the real necessity of things, and guard ourselves from concluding the second from the first. When I say a triangle is a figure which has three angles, I indicate a necessary relation in such a way that, the subject once given, the attribute is inevitably linked with it. But, although it is contradictory to suppose a triangle after suppressing in thought the three angles, it involves no contradiction to suppress both one and the other, both subject and predicate. In like manner, though it is a contradiction to deny omnipotence when we suppose God, it is no contradiction to deny both; here all disappears, attribute and subject, and there is no longer any possible contradiction. If it be said that there is such a subject which cannot be suppressed, and should therefore remain, the answer is, that this is reaffirming an absolutely necessary subject, and is begging the question.

“Kant insists that there is no contradiction in the negation of God's existence. When we say of such and such a thing, whose existence we regard as possible, that such a thing exists, what species of proposition is employed? Do we employ an analytical or a synthetical proposition? If, in affirming the existence of anything, an analytical proposition be employed, we add nothing to the idea we have of it, and we consequently affirm this existence only because it is already in the idea which we have already of the thing itself, which is but a repetition. It proves nothing in reference to the *real* existence, for it is not already given as existent. On the other hand, is the proposition which affirms the existence of any certain thing synthetical? In that case there is no contradiction in suppressing the predicate of existence; for analytical propositions are the only ones in which, according to Kant, any contradiction is implied by a

denial of the predicate, the subject being once given. It is by this means that we recognise such propositions. It is thus a contradiction to suppose a triangle, if in thought we suppress the three angles—to suppose God, if we deny omnipotence; because these propositions, a triangle is a figure which has three angles, God is omnipotent, are analytical propositions. But if the proposition which affirms the existence of God be synthetical, how can it involve any contradiction to suppose the non-existence of God? The contradiction would only be possible on the supposition that the proposition is analytical, and this can only be on the condition of its proving nothing.

“Again, how can we conclude, from the mere conception of a perfect being, that it exists, so long as the existence itself is not an attribute, a predicate which determines the idea of the subject? Now, existence cannot be regarded as an attribute, whose idea, added to that which we have of the subject, develops it, completes it, determines it. When I say God is all powerful, the attribute all-powerful determines the idea of God; but when I conceive God as simply possible or real, the idea of him rests the same in both cases. Here it is certain that the real involves nothing more than the possible; if it were otherwise, the idea which we have of anything would not be complete until we had conceived it as possible. It follows that if I conceive a being as perfect, I may perplex myself as much as I please by trying to evolve from the idea the real existence. The question of existence always remains, and it is not from the conception of the object, conceived as possible, that we can draw the concept of its reality. We are, therefore, obliged to quit the concept of an object if we would accord to it any real existence. This conclusion, if just, upsets the ontological argument, since this argument pretends to conclude from the idea of a perfect being, conceived as possible, its reality. ‘Thus,’ says Kant, ‘Leibnitz is far from having done what he intended, though he may have arrived at the knowledge *à priori* of the possibility of the existence of an ideal being so elevated. In this celebrated ontological proof for the existence of a supreme being, all labour is in vain; and a man no more augments his knowledge by ideas than a merchant augments his fortune by adding a few cyphers to the sum which expresses his capital.’

“But though the argument which has just been examined

may prove nothing, and may not establish the real existence of God, may we not hope to succeed by adopting a different mode of argument? No, according to Kant; and here reappears the difficulty, insoluble according to him, which the transcendental dialectic opposes to the validity of human knowledge. As the existence of God, or of the perfect being, is placed beyond the conditions of experience, we have no right either to deny or affirm it; to suppose it, is to make a supposition which may be useful, perhaps necessary to the development and perfection of intelligence, but which can in no other manner be justified, at least under the actual conditions of human existence."

Again (page 130): "The argument which Kant calls *cosmological* is that which Leibnitz has named *à contingentia mundi*. Kant thus presents it: 'If anything whatever exists, then there must exist an absolutely necessary being; now, something does exist, as, for example, myself, therefore an absolutely necessary being exists. The minor contains an experimental fact, and the major concludes from an experimental fact in general to the existence of a necessary being. The proof thus sets out from experience, and is not, therefore, *à priori* or ontological.

"Kant makes necessary being a sort of monstrosity. 'The absolute necessity,' he says, 'which we seem to consider so indispensable a thing as the last support of all things, is the veritable gulf of human reason. Eternity itself, however sublime and however terrible, as depicted by Haller, turns the brain less, for it but measures the duration of things, and does not attempt to sustain them. We can neither banish the thought, nor can we support it, that a being, which we represent to ourselves as the highest of all possible beings, might say to himself, 'I am from all eternity; out of me nothing exists but as I will. *But whence am I, then?* Here we are lost.'"

Dr. John Pye Smith says ("First Lines of Christian Theology," p. 170):

"It is one of the fundamental principles of the moral philosophy of Kant that we cannot but perceive a *connection*, constant and inseparable, between virtue and happiness; that this connection is totally *independent* of ourselves—we did not make it, it has a manifest existence (though debilitated and confined) under the most unfavourable circumstances, and we cannot abrogate it; and that, therefore, it is *communicated by God*, the Being of Supreme

Perfection, and to whom moral goodness must be necessarily and always agreeable."

"The sovereign good," says Kant ("Philosophy of Kant," p. liv.), "is not possible in the world unless we admit a Supreme Being, endowed with a causality conformable to moral intention. Now, a being which is capable of acting according to the representation of certain laws is an intelligence (a rational being), and the causality of such a being, as determined by this representation, is a will. Therefore, the supreme cause of nature, as a condition of the sovereign good, is a being who is the cause of nature, as intelligence and will (consequently the author of nature)—that is to say, *God*." This assumed "sovereign good" exists only in the imagination of Kant. We can only measure the goodness of any given act by its tendency to happiness. If a "supreme being" be assumed as "cause of nature," cause of "sovereign good," then no state should exist, which is not within those words. The existence of any "guilt" or "misery" is conclusive against a supreme cause sufficient for universal "sovereign good."

In a dialogue between a preceptor and scholar, Kant says (p. lxi.) :

"P. Has reason any ground for believing it *as real*, any such supreme power, dealing out happiness and misery according to desert and guilt, having sway over the whole physical system, and governing the world with the most unerring wisdom—in other words, that God exists?"

"S. Yes; for we discover in those works of nature that we can judge of, marks of wisdom so vast and profound that we can account for it only by ascribing it to the unsearchable will of a Creator, from whom we deem ourselves entitled to expect an equally admirable adjustment of the moral order of the world—that is, a harmony between virtue and happiness—and that we may hereafter hope to become partakers of this happiness, provided we do not, by a neglect of our duty, render ourselves unworthy of it." This is no more than saying that to account for uncomprehended phenomena we invent "the unsearchable will;" these words really meaning nothing whatever.

"The thinking subject," says Kant (p. 90), "is the object of psychology, the union of all phenomena (the world) is the object of cosmology; and that which contains the supreme condition of the possibility of all that can be thought, the being of all beings, is the object of theology.

Thus, the pure reason furnishes the ideas of a transcendental science of the soul (*rational psychology*), a transcendental science of the world (*rational cosmology*), and, lastly, a transcendental science of God (*transcendental theology*).

“Let us add,” says Victor Cousin (p. 177), “that Kant’s God, or, at least, the God of his metaphysic, is not the God of humanity. What, indeed, is he? A pure ideal, at the summit of human knowledge, which allows the mind to raise it to the highest possible unity, but which can have no legitimate value. Is it this ideal, destitute of reality; is it this hypothetical object of a regulative idea, which all men look up to as the cause and primitive substance of all things, the Being of Beings, and the Father of the human race?”

Victor Cousin is right in his objection to Kant’s God as “destitute of reality;” but the same objection is, we submit, equally potent against M. Cousin’s “Being of Beings and Father of the human race.” There is surely no more reality in the one “ideal” than in the other. There is no legitimate value in the phrase “Father of the human race,” and we maintain that the words, if submitted to analysis, contain no truth. Kant presents us with an unsatisfactory array of subtle word-play; and it is sometimes difficult to imagine that he was earnestly enlisted on either side, so much do his reasonings tell for and against both positions. This is remarkably illustrated in his four antinomies.

The four antinomies of Kant are (“Philosophy of Kant,” p. 106):—First, the *thesis* is: “The universe has had a beginning in time, and has a boundary in space.” To establish this thesis, Kant shows that the contrary supposition is inadmissible, and that it is impossible to regard the universe as not having a beginning. In fact, if it never had a beginning, it follows that every moment is in eternity—in other words, that at each instant the successive state of things in the universe form an infinite series. Now, the characteristic of an infinite series is this, that it can never be completed by a successive synthesis. Consequently, this infinite series of successive states is impossible. Therefore, we have a right to conclude that the world has had a beginning. In the same manner, it may be established that space is limited, by showing the impossibility of its being unlimited. If the world fills space entirely, we can only conceive it as an infinite number of parts. If this composition (of parts), which can only be successive, requires a time

proportioned to it, viz., an infinite time, it supposes an infinite time already passed, and we thus admit the hypothesis that has already been rejected; therefore, the world is limited in space.

“Such are the arguments in favour of the thesis. Those in favour of the antithesis, that *the world has not had a beginning in time, and that it has no limits in space*, are as conclusive. To establish the thesis, Kant has previously shown the impossibility of admitting the antithesis; now, in order to establish the antithesis, he shows the impossibility of admitting the thesis. If the world has had a beginning, the time which preceded its existence must have been void. Now in such a time nothing can begin to be, because existence in such a case must be as unconditional as non-existence; and we are driven to the supposition of things either passing from nothing to existence of themselves, or by the action of a foreign cause. On the other hand, if the world be limited in space, there is an empty space which limits it, which empty space is impossible. In fact, space, as we have seen, is simply the form of external intuition; its existence vanishes the moment it is considered independently of objects; consequently, though there may exist a relation amongst things in space, there cannot exist a relation of things to space, which it would be necessary to admit, under the supposition that the world is limited. It is, therefore, infinite.

“Second Antimony.—*Thesis*: ‘Every compound substance is made up of simple parts; and everything in the universe is either simple or composed of simple elements.’ If we suppose that compound substances are not composed of simple elements, these substances once decomposed, there would exist neither compound nor simple—there would, in fact, be nothing; and, consequently, the existence of substance itself might be denied, which is absurd. It follows that all substances are simple, and that compound bodies must be composed of simple parts, which demonstrates the thesis. But here is the antithesis: ‘No compound thing is made up of simple parts, and nowhere do any such parts exist.’ Suppose a compound body to be composed of simple parts, all such parts, like the compound body itself, must exist in space. Now, space itself, not being composed of simple parts, everything which occupies a space must have elements external to each other, and must consequently be compound. The simple would, therefore, be compound,

which is a contradiction. Besides, we can have no intuition of an ultimate uncomposed object ; a simple substance is, therefore, but an idea, to which, in the sensible world, nothing corresponds. It may, therefore, be affirmed that no simple bodies exist in the world.

“Third Antimony.—*Thesis* : ‘Everything that happens in the world cannot depend upon natural laws alone ; we must admit the action of a free cause.’ If there be only physical and natural laws, every event succeeds some anterior state. But this anterior state must have had a beginning, and, therefore, it supposes a state anterior to itself, and we arrive at a series of successive states, each engendering the other ; so that we can never arrive at a commencement, and thus the series remains without any absolute condition. Now, it is a law that nothing happens without an efficient cause ; it is, therefore, a contradiction to admit only the causality of nature ; we must also admit an absolute and primitive causality, producing a series of phenomena by its absolute spontaneity—that is to say, a free cause. *Antithesis* : ‘There is no such thing as liberty ; everything in the world submits blindly to the laws of nature.’ In any given moment, a cause is operative only on condition of its being itself previously uncaused. Now, either these two states of action and inertia are related to each other, or they are not. If one engenders the other, it may be asked, whence comes the first in its turn ? and in this infinite series of causes, which we are obliged to acknowledge, the liberty of the agent disappears. If, on the contrary, these two states are independent of each other, then an effect may take place without a cause, which is absurd. Therefore, everything in the world is governed by the fatality of natural laws.

“Fourth Antimony.—*Thesis* : ‘A necessary condition for the existence of the world is, that there should exist at the same time, whether in the world as making part of it, or out of the world as its cause, a necessarily existent being.’ The sensible world, considered as an assemblage of phenomena, contains at the same time a series of changes. Now every change, every contingent phenomenon, implies an anterior condition ; and reason obliges us to ascend from condition to condition until we arrive at something which does not depend upon any other—that is to say, something necessary. But this necessary being belongs himself to the sensible world, otherwise he would not exist in time, and could not in any sense be said to be the cause of a series

of events. There is, therefore, in the world something absolutely necessary, which is either the totality of the phenomena or simply a part of them. *Antithesis*: 'There is nowhere, neither in the world nor out of it, as its cause an absolutely necessary being.' Suppose that the world should either be itself, or contain in itself, a necessary being; there is then in the series of changes a beginning absolutely necessary, which is freed from the law of causality, or the series itself is without any beginning; and although all the parts are contingent, the union is necessary, which is contradictory. And, again, we cannot suppose a being placed *out* of the world, whose action takes place in time, who is himself consequently in time—that is to say, *in* the world. There is, then, nowhere a necessary being."

As there is very much difference of opinion as to Kant, and as Victor Cousin is charged with "having flagrantly misunderstood him on certain points," the reader is referred to the splendid summary by Mr. G. H. Lewes, in his "Biographical History of Philosophy" (vol. ii., ninth epoch), from which the scope of this work allows only a limited quotation:

"From Spinoza to Kant," writes Mr. Lewes (Lewes's "Biographical History of Philosophy." vol. ii., pp. 441-445), "the great question we have seen to be this: Have we any ideas which can be accepted as objective truths, and which, removed from the possible illusions of the senses and the understanding, may be made the basis of a philosophy revealing the realities of existence?"

"This question, variously answered, resolved itself into the more definite question: Have we any ideas independent of experience?"

"It had become evident that, before we could determine the objective value of our knowledge, we were bound to investigate the nature and conditions of the knowing faculties. Ontology thus was, for a time, superseded by psychology. Locke, Hume, the Sensational School, the Scotch School, and Gall, all these proclaim experience the foundation of knowledge; and yet, inasmuch as experience led irresistibly to scepticism, this was a dilemma which seemed only to be avoided by seeking refuge in common sense, *i. e.*, a denial of philosophy. Kant declined this refuge. He said it was the notable invention of modern times, whereby the emptiest noodle could place himself on a level with the profoundest thinker (*'Prolegomena: Vorrede,'* werke iii.,

170). He saw two conceptions of the world to be logically tenable: Materialism and Scepticism. He rejected both, and strove to reconcile what was true in both with what was true in the *à priori* doctrine. He called his system a *Criticism*. His object was to examine into the nature of this experience which led into scepticism. While men were agreed that experience was the source of all knowledge, Kant asked himself, What is this experience? what are its elements?

“The problem he set himself to solve was but a new aspect of the problem of Locke’s *Essay*. On this deep and intricate question of human knowledge two opposite parties had been formed—the one declaring that all our knowledge was given in experience, and that all the materials were derived from sensation, and reflection upon those materials; the other declaring that these only furnished a portion of our knowledge. This second part maintained that there were elements of knowledge which not only were never derived from sensation, but which absolutely *transcended* all sensation; such, for instance, is the idea of substance. Experience only informs us of *qualities*. To these qualities we add a substratum, which we call substance; and this idea of a substratum, which, we are *compelled* to add, Locke himself confesses we never gained through any sensation of matter. Other ideas, such as causality, infinity, eternity, &c., are also independent of experience; *ergo*, said this school, antecedent to it.

“In the course of inquiry, the untenableness of the theory of innate ideas has become apparent. Descartes himself, when closely pressed by his adversaries, gave it up. Still, the fact of our possessing ideas apparently *not* derivable from experience remained, and this fact was to be explained. To explain it, Leibnitz asserted that, although all knowledge *begins with* sensation, it is not all *derived from* sensation—the mind furnishes its quota; and what it furnishes has the character of universality, necessity, consequently of truth, stamped on it. This doctrine, slightly modified, is popularly known as the doctrine of ‘original instincts,’ of ‘fundamental laws of belief.’

“Kant also recognised the fact insisted on by the adversaries of the Sensational School; and this fact he set himself carefully to examine. His first object was, therefore, a criticism of the operations of the mind.

“Kant considered that his conception of a purely critical

philosophy was entirely original. No one before him had thought of thus subjecting reason itself to a thoroughly critical investigation, in order to reach answers to such questions as : Are *à priori* synthetic judgments possible? Is a science of metaphysics possible? And here may be noted an illustration of what was said at the opening of this section respecting Kant's originality. Certainly, no one had isolated the *à priori* elements of knowledge from those given in experience, as Kant isolated them, to build a system thereon ; nevertheless the whole tendency of speculative development, since Hobbes, has been, as we have seen, towards the investigation of the grounds of certitude, *i.e.*, towards a criticism of the knowing faculties.

“On interrogating his consciousness, Kant found that neither of the two ordinary explanations would account for the phenomena ; certain ideas, such as time, space, causality, &c., could not be resolved into experience alone ; nor, on the other hand, although *à priori*, could they be supposed absolutely *independent* of experience, being, as it were, only the *forms* (necessary conditions) of our experience.

“There are not *two* sources of knowledge, said he : on the one side external objects, and on the other human understanding. Knowledge has but *one* source, and that is the *union* of object and subject ; it is the function of two co-efficients. Thus, water is the union of oxygen and hydrogen ; but you cannot say that water has two causes, oxygen and hydrogen. These are its conditions (*Bedingungen*), its co-efficients ; it has only one cause, namely, the union of the two.

“In this conception the existence of the two distinct factors is assumed. ‘That all our knowledge begins with experience,’ he says, ‘there can be no doubt. For how is it possible that the faculty of cognition should be awakened into exercise otherwise than by means of objects which affect our senses, and partly of themselves produce representations (*Vorstellungen*), partly rouse our powers of understanding into activity, to compare, to connect, or to separate these, and so to convert the raw material of our sensuous impressions into a knowledge of objects which is called experience? In respect of time, therefore, no knowledge of ours is antecedent to experience, but begins with it. But although all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that it arises out of experience. For, on the contrary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge

(*Erfahrungserkenntniss*) is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself (sensuous impressions giving merely the *occasion*), an addition which we cannot distinguish from the original element given by sense, till long practice has made us attentive to and skilful in separating it. It is, therefore, a question which requires close investigation, and is not to be answered at first sight: Whether there exists a knowledge altogether independent of experience, and even of all sensuous impressions?"

Mr. Lewes says of Kant (Lewes's "Biographical History of Philosophy," vol. ii., pp. 461-462) :

"His object was to give a theory of all the pure elements, *à priori*, which enter into knowledge as distinguished from the *à posteriori* elements. He advances four fundamental propositions :

"1. That experience does not furnish the whole of our knowledge.

"2. That what it does furnish has the character of contingency and variability.

"3. That the mind also furnishes an element, which element is an inseparable condition of all knowledge; without it knowledge could not be.

"4. That this element has the character of universality and necessity.

"5. And that the principle of all certitude is precisely this universality and necessity.

"He set himself to examine the nature of the mind, and to trace the distinctive characters of each element of knowledge, *i.e.*, the objective and the subjective. Instead of saying, with the Sensational School, all our knowledge is derived from the senses, Kant said, *Half* of our knowledge is derived from the senses, and the half which has another origin, is *indissolubly bound up with the former half*. Thus, instead of saying with the Cartesians, that, besides the ideas acquired through the sense, we have also certain ideas, which are innate and irrespective of sense, Kant said *all* our ideas have a double origin, and this two-fold co-operation of object and subject is *indispensable* to all knowledge."

"*First Result* (Lewes's "Biographical History of Philosophy," vol. ii., pp. 471-473).—A knowledge of things *per se* (*Dinge an sich*) is impossible, so long as knowledge remains composed as at present. Consequently ontology, as a

science, is impossible. But it may be asked, if we never knew noumena (*Dinge an sich*), how do we know that they exist? The answer is simple: Their existence is a necessary postulate. Although we can only know the appearances of things, we are forced to conclude that the things exist. Thus, in the case of a rainbow, we discover that it is only the appearance of certain drops of water. These drops of water, again, although owing their shape, colour, &c., to our sensibility, nevertheless exist. They do not exist *as* drops of water, because drops of water are but phenomena; but there is an unknown something which, when affecting our sensibility, appears to us as drops of water. Of this unknown something we can affirm nothing, except that it necessarily exists because it affects us. We are conscious of being affected; we are conscious also that that which affects us must be something different from ourselves. This the law of causation reveals to us. A phenomenon, inasmuch as it is an appearance, pre-supposes a noumenon—a thing *which appears*; but this noumenon, which is a necessary postulate, is only a negation to us. It can never be positively known; it can only be known under the conditions of sense and understanding—*ergo*, as a phenomenon.

“*Second Result.*—The existence of an external world is a necessary postulate; but its existence is only logically affirmed. From the foregoing, it appears that we are unable to know anything respecting things *per se*; consequently, we can never predicate of our knowledge that it has objective truth. But our knowledge being purely subjective and relative, can we have no certainty? are we to embrace scepticism? No.

“*Third Result.*—Our knowledge, though relative, is *certain*. We have ideas independent of experience, and these ideas have the character of universality and necessity. Here we see the effect of confusing cognitions with conditions of cognition. It is not ideas that are independent of experience, but organic conditions on which ideas depend. Although we are not entitled to conclude that our subjective knowledge is completely true as an expression of an objective fact, yet we are forced to conclude that within its own sphere it is true.

“*Fourth Result.*—The veracity of consciousness is established.

“*Fifth Result.*—With the veracity of consciousness is

established the certainty of morals. It is here we see the importance of Kant's analysis of the mind. Those who reproach him with having ended, like Hume, in scepticism, can only have attended to his *Critique of the Pure Reason*, which certainly does, as we said before, furnish a scientific basis for scepticism. It proves that our knowledge is relative ; that we cannot assume things external to us to be as we conceive them ; in a word, that ontology is impossible.

“So far Kant goes with Hume. This is the goal they both attain ; this is the limit they agree to set to the powers of the mind. But the different views they took of the nature of mind led to the difference we before noted respecting the certainty of knowledge. Kant having shown that consciousness, as far as it extended, was veracious, and having shown that in consciousness certain elements were given which were not derived from experience, but which were necessarily *true* ; it followed that whatever was found in consciousness, independent of experience, was to be trusted without dispute.

“If in consciousness I find the ideas of God and Virtue, I cannot escape believing in God and Virtue. This belief of mine is, I admit, practical, not theoretical ; it is founded on a *certainty*, not on a *demonstration* ; it is an ultimate fact, from which I cannot escape—it is not a conclusion deduced by reason.

[The answer simply is, that you do not find in consciousness the ideas of “God” and “virtue,” except as artificial results, each of the words varying in their significance in different individuals (see page 118) ; the word “God” generally being the equivalent for all uninvestigated cause, and the word “virtue” sometimes being the exact equivalent in the mind of one person for conduct for which the word “vice” is the equivalent in the mind of another.]

“The attempt to demonstrate the existence of God is an impossible attempt. Reason is utterly incompetent to the task. The attempt to penetrate the essence of things—to know things *per se*—to know noumena—is also an impossible attempt. And yet, that God exists, that the world exists, are irresistible convictions.

[Here the difficulty is, that “world” is used for the substance of all phenomena, and “God” is a sign of three letters, with no meaning attached.]

“There is another certitude, therefore, besides that

derived from demonstration, and this is moral certitude, which is grounded upon belief. I cannot say, 'It is morally certain that God exists;' but I must say, 'I am morally certain that God exists.'"

"After having shown (Lewes's 'Biographical History of Philosophy,' vol. ii., pp. 486-487), as he conceives, the vanity of all theology based on the intellect and Speculative Reason, Kant professes to restore what he had apparently destroyed, by means of the moral or Practical Reason. Relying upon this, he reintroduces to us the theological doctrine, that the world is governed by a Personal God, a righteous Judge, who awards to men after death the lot which they deserve; appropriate misery to the bad, and appropriate bliss to the good.

"But if the principles employed in the critique of the Speculative Reason are correct, how can judgments obtained by means of the Practical Reason possess any absolute truth? It is urged that they have a character of necessity or universality, and that judgments having this character should be regarded as absolutely true. If the critique is correct, it has been shown that the character in question may arise simply from the fact that our minds are constituted in a particular way; and that it does not authorise us to believe that other beings think or judge in like manner. If this be the case, the judgments in question, however useful they may be for the regulation of our conduct, cannot authorise us to affirm the existence of an unseen noumenon, wholly beyond the field of experience, and to affirm that this noumenon governs the universe according to our idea of justice.

"Further, it is evident that when Kant, in his moral theology, affirms God to exist, to be a righteous Governor of the Universe, rewarding the good and punishing the bad, he sets quite at nought the principle laid down in his critique; that categories and conceptions have no valid application, except to phenomena and to objects of experience. For it is uniformly assumed by Kant that God is a noumenon, not a phenomenon, and that he does not lie within the field of possible experience. Were this otherwise, all Kant's critique of rational theology would fall to the ground. If, then, we can legitimately predicate of God existence, goodness, righteousness, power, and the attributes of a moral governor, we can legitimately make application of categories and conceptions to a noumenon, and

that, too, not merely problematically, but assertorically."

To again use the acute Theistic writer in the *British Quarterly* (p. 74): "The Kantian argument is more intricate and much less satisfactory than the common evidence from the phenomena of conscience itself. It is founded on the moral law, with its 'categorical imperative,' asserting that certain actions are right and others wrong, in a world in which the right is often defrauded of its legitimate awards, and the wrong is temporarily successful. This, however, says Kant, points to a future, in which the irregularity will be redressed, and, *therefore*, to a Supreme Moral Power, able to effect it. The argument is altogether inferential. It is circuitous, its conclusion being, in a sense, an appendix to the doctrine of immortality, and it has only a secondary connection with the data of the moral law itself."

We do not feel sure that we have either fairly stated Kant's position, or efficiently replied to so much as we have stated. In condensing within the limits of this Text-Book the views of a writer so involved in his expressions as is Immanuel Kant, we may have failed both in exposition and answer, but have the consolation that we, at any rate, place before our readers the sources of completer knowledge.

We now arrive at the last division of the Theistic arguments, quoting here again the able anonymous writer to whose thoughts we have been so much indebted, and to whom specially we are now to attempt some reply (*British Quarterly Review*, No. CVII., p. 54).

The "evidence of intuition" is urged by the writer as "of greatest value," although he fairly states some of the arguments against it—viz., "that it is at best only valid for the individual who may happen to feel its force ; that it is not a universal endowment (as it should be, if trustworthy), but often altogether wanting ; and that it can never yield us certainty, because its root is a subjective feeling or conviction, which cannot be verified by external test. These charges," says the Theistic writer, "cannot be ignored or lightly passed over. And for the Theist merely to proclaim, as an ultimate fact, that the human soul has an intuition of God, that we are endowed with a faculty of apprehension of which the correlative object is divine, will carry no conviction to the Atheist. Suppose he replies : 'This intuition may be valid evidence for you, but I have no such irrepressible instinct ; I see no evidence in favour of innate

ideas in the soul, or of a substance underneath the phenomena of nature of which we can have any adequate knowledge ;' we may close the argument by simple re-assertion, and vindicate our procedure on the ground that, in the region of first principles, there can be no farther proof. [But, if the "argument" be thus closed, it is because the alleged intuition is only asserted, is not proved, and there is really no proof at all ; see page 114.] We may also affirm that the instinct, being a sacred endowment, and delicate in proportion to the stupendous nature of the object it attests, it may, like every other function of the human spirit, collapse from mere disuse. [But, at least, then, this delicate sacred endowment should be found clear and complete in the child. Is it so found ? and what is meant by a sacred intuition collapsing by disuse ?] But if we are to succeed in even suggesting a doubt in the mind of our opponent as to the accuracy of his analysis, we must verify one primary belief, and exhibit its credentials so far as that is possible."

To the anticipated answer, that the Atheist has no such intuition, the answer is, that the mind starts with "gifts in embryo. They are not full-formed powers, so much as the capacities and potentialities of mental life. [But a capacity to think is not a thought, and may never be exercised.] Their growth to maturity is most gradual, and the difference between their adult and their rudimentary phases is as wide as the interval between a mature organisation and the egg from which it springs. It is, therefore," he contends, "no evidence against the reality or the trustworthiness of the intuition to which we appeal, that its manifestations are not uniform, or that it sometimes seems absent in the abnormal states of consciousness, or among the ruder civilisations of the world." An "intuition," which sometimes "seems absent," and the "manifestations" of which differ in the same individual at different stages, is, we submit, scarcely a very reliable witness.

Mrs. Besant, in her "True Basis of Morality," has sharply attacked the intuition theory, and we avail ourselves here of the argument she states :—"One fatal defect promptly disposes of the claims of intuition as a safe and reliable basis. Intuition, to be of any real value, must be fairly universal in its testimony : but it turns out to be as variable as the various nations of the earth. It depends on race civilisation, on custom, on habit ; intuition does not speak *one*

language, it speaks in many tongues ; it varies its dictates according to the use of the people. To say that intuition is God's voice in the soul of man, and then to exalt one set of intuitions as the rule for the world, is simply to juggle with words, and to set up a new *authority* on the pedestal whence the old has been taken down. If one intuition be pronounced to speak justly, then all other intuitions, speaking at variance with it, must be held to be false ; and the reason and judgment of one man will choose differently from the reason and judgment of his neighbour ; and so there will be many divine voices contradicting each other, a result not consonant either with reason or with reverence. Besides, if intuition deceives our fellow creatures on all sides, are we wise, or even safe, in trusting it in our own cases ? Is there any particular reason why *our* intuition should be *the* intuition ? The real truth is, that what is called intuition is only the result of transmitted tendencies ; it is a conveniently vague word under which to group certain phenomena of the mind, which are governed by laws at present very imperfectly known to us. Instinct and intuition only denote the tendency to do certain actions, or to think certain thoughts, and this tendency, which may be easily nullified or modified by changed conditions, arises from our ancestors having done these actions for generation after generation, until the doing became a habit, the predisposition to which is transmitted from parent to child. Instinct is the accumulated experience of the race impressed upon the yet unborn creature, and, unless checked, moulding many of its habits before any personal thought or experience comes in. And so intuition represents the result of the cumulated experience of the race, transmitted to the individual."

"We admit," the Theistic writer says (p. 55), "that it is difficult for the uninitiated to trace any affinity between its normal and its abnormal manifestations, when it is modified by circumstances to any extent. We farther admit that, while never entirely absent, it may sometimes seem to slumber, not only in stray individuals, but in a race or an era, and be transmitted from generation to generation in a latent state. It may hibernate, and then awake as from the sleep of years, arising against the will of its possessor, and refusing to be silenced. Almost any phenomenon may call it forth, and no single phenomenon can quench it. It is the spontaneous utterance of the soul in presence of the object whose existence it attests, and as such it is necessarily prior to any act

of reflection upon its character, validity, or significance. Reflex thought, which is the product of experience, cannot in any case originate an intuition, or account for those phenomena which we may call by that name, supposing them to be delusive. Nothing in us, from the simplest instinct to the loftiest intuition, could in any sense create the object it attests, or after which it seeks and feels. And all our ultimate principles, irreducible by analysis, simply attest and assert.

“The very existence of the intuition of which we now speak is itself a revelation, because pointing to a Revealer within or behind itself. And, however crude in its elementary forms, it manifests itself in its highest and purest state at once as an act of intelligence and of faith. [On page 114 we have already quoted from Mr. George H. Lewes on intuition. We not only deny the possibility of intuition, independent of or preceding experience, but we urge that the writer, in saying that “any phenomenon may call it forth,” really admits that what he calls intuition is a judgment on events.] It proclaims a supreme existence without and beyond the mind, which it apprehends in the act of revealing itself.”

But the nature of the proclamation depends on the inherited thought-ability and predisposition, and on the conditions of thought-activity; and the “proclamation” varies with each individual variation. The acute writer seems to overlook that he alleges “God” revealing himself directly to the individual in the intuition, and yet speaks of abnormal manifestations of this revelation, and concedes that the revelation may seem to slumber in a race or an era. To ourselves—denying, as we do, the possibility of intuition, except as explained on page 114—the writer’s own candid admissions are fatal to his case. Seeking to describe in some degree the character of the intuition to which he appeals as evidence, he says (p. 57): “It is one thing to create or evolve (even unconsciously) a mental image of ourselves, which we vainly attempt to magnify to infinity, and thereafter worship the image that our minds have framed; it is another to discern for a moment an august Presence *other than the human*, through a break in the clouds which usually veil him from our eyes. And it is to the inward recognition of this self-revealing object that the Theist makes appeal. What he discerns is at least not a ‘form of his mind’s own throwing;’ while his know-

ledge is due not to the penetration of his own finite spirit, but to the condescension of the infinite."

This is an emotional declaration, not a reasonable argument; no reply can be given to it, for it advances no plea capable of analysis for the existence of God.

"Our knowledge," says the writer, p. 58, "of the object which intuition discloses is at first, in all cases, necessarily unreflective. In the presence of that object, the mind does not double back upon itself, to scrutinise the origin and test the accuracy of the report that has reached it. And thus the truth which it apprehends is at first only presumptive. It remains to be afterwards tested by reflection, that no allusion be mistaken for reality. What, then, are the tests of our intuitions? There are sundry elements in every intuition on which we do not here enlarge, as they are necessary features rather than criteria, characteristics rather than tests. Two of them may be merely stated: 1st., Every intuition is ultimate, and carries its own evidence within itself; it cannot appeal to any higher witness beyond itself; and, 2nd., The fact or facts which it proclaims, while irreducible by analysis, must be incapable of any other explanation."

Here there is no fact proclaimed, the words "supreme existence," "august presence," are not the counters for expressing concepts of fact; they are only fine sounds which avoid instead of proclaiming, which hide instead of making clear.

"The following seem sufficient criteria of their validity and trustworthiness: 1st. The persistence with which they appear and reappear after experimental reflection upon them, the obstinacy with which they reassert themselves when silenced, the tenacity with which they cling to us. 2nd. Their historical permanence; the confirmation of ages and of generations. They hold they have upon the general mind of the race is the sign of some 'root of endurance' planted firmly in the soil of human nature. If 'deep in the general heart of men, their power survives,' we may accept them as true, or interpret them as a phase of some deeper yet kindred truth, of which they are the popular distortion. [Unlike Schelling, who contended for an intellectual intuition not common to all men, but the endowment only of a few of the privileged (George H. Lewes' "History of Philosophy," vol. ii., p. 521), the Theistic writer we are quoting contends for an intuition "common

to all," but he fails to furnish an atom of evidence either of the existence or of the "historical permanence" of any such intuition.] 3rd. The interior harmony which they exhibit with each other, and with the rest of our psychological nature; each of the intuitions being in harmony with the entire circle, and with the whole realm of knowledge. If any alleged intuition should come into collision with any other and disturb it, there would be good reason for suspecting its genuineness; and in that case the lower and less authenticated must always yield to the higher and better attested. But if the critical intellect carrying our intuition (if we may so speak in a figure) round the circle of our nature, and in turn placing it in juxtaposition with the rest, finds that no collision ensues, we may safely conclude that the witness of that intuition is true. [No clear intuitions have even been alleged by the writer; it is, therefore, impossible to plead harmony between them. The Theistic writer even admits that the special intuition, which is his whole evidence, is on its first use "crude, dim, and inarticulate." Dim and inarticulate intuitions can hardly be expected to come into collision with each other.] 4th. If the results of its action and influence are such as to elevate and etherealise our nature, its validity may be assumed. This is no test by itself, for an erroneous belief might for a time even elevate the mind that held it; as the intellectual life evoked by many of the erroneous theories and exploded hypotheses of the past has been great. But no error could do so permanently. No illusion could survive as an educative and elevating power over humanity; and no alleged instinct could sustain its claim, and vindicate its presumptive title, if it could not stand the test we mention. [The answer here is that the "Theistic faith" has not been found "permanently educative and elevating." Its moral leverage is not denied, but is affirmed to have been injurious. Education and elevation have been in degree proportionate to the emancipation of the mind from Theistic faith.] A theoretic error is seen to be such when we attempt to reduce it to practice; as a hidden crack or fissure in a metal becomes visible when a strain is applied, or the folly of an ideal Utopia is seen in the actual life of a mixed commonwealth. Many of those scientific guesses which have served as good provisional hypotheses, have been abandoned in the actual working of them out; and so the flaw that lurks within an alleged intuition (if there be a flaw), will become apparent

when we try to apply it in actual life, and take it as a regulative principle in action. Thus, take the belief in the divine existence, attested, as we affirm, by intuition, and apply it in the act of worship or adoration. Does that belief (which fulfils the conditions of our previous tests, for it appears everywhere and clings tenaciously to man, and comes into collision with no other normal tendency of our nature, or defrauds any instinct of its due) does it elevate the nature of him who holds it? The reply of history is conclusive, and its attestation is abundantly clear. The power of the Theistic faith over the rest of human nature is such that it has quickened the other faculties into a more vigorous life. Its moral leverage has been vast, while it has sharpened the æsthetic sense to some of its more delicate perceptions, and in some instances brought a new accession of intellectual power."

Though we have stated the tests and criteria of the argument sought to be maintained in favour of intuition so fully that we believe the Theistic writer will be satisfied with our fairness, it will be seen that we utterly deny that any intuition has been shown to exist coming within those tests. Every fact alleged to be evidenced by intuition can be reduced and explained by analysis, unless the alleged fact be so vaguely stated that it is utterly useless and impracticable to attempt its examination.

The Theistic writer adds (p. 59):—"It is not only essential to the validity of the Theistic intuition that the human mind has a positive though imperfect knowledge of the infinite, but the assertion of this is involved in the very intuition itself. If we had no positive knowledge of the source it seeks to reach, the instinct, benumbed as by an intellectual frost, and unable to rise, would be fatally paralysed; or if it could move along its finite area, it would wander helplessly, feeling after its object, 'if haply it might find it.' And it will be found that all who deny the validity of our intuition, either limit us to the knowledge of phenomena, or, while admitting that we have a certain knowledge of finite substance, adopt the cold theory of nescience."

"Comte, Lewes, Mill, Mr. Bain, Herbert Spencer, and the majority of our best scientific guides (however they differ in its detail) agree in the common postulate that all that man can know, and intelligibly reason about, are phenomena, and the laws of these phenomena, 'that which doth appear.'"

On this the reader is especially referred to the chapter on "The Relativity of Human Knowledge," by J. S. Mill, in his Examination of Sir W. Hamilton.

"With us," says the *British Quarterly Review* writer (p. 62,) "the relativity of knowledge is a first principle in philosophy. But to affirm it, is merely to assert that all that is known occupies a fixed relation to the knower. It is to affirm nothing as to the character or contents of his knowledge. As regards the objects known, we further maintain that they are apprehended only in their differences and contrasts. We know self only in its contrast with what is not self, a particular portion of matter only in its relation to other portions which surround and transcend it. So also, and for the same reason, with the finite and infinite. The one is not a positive notion, and the other negative; the one clear, and the other obscure. Both are equally clear, both sharply defined, so far as they are given us in relation. If the one notion suffers, the other suffers with it. In short, if we discharge any notion from all relation with its opposite or contrary, it ceases to be a notion at all. The finite, if we take it alone, is as inconceivable as the infinite, if we take it alone; phenomena by themselves are as incogitable as substance by itself, and the relative as a notion cut off from the absolute which antithetically bounds it, is not more intelligible than the absolute as an essence absolved from all relations. And thus the entire fabric of our knowledge being founded on contrasts, and arising out of differences, involving in its every datum another element hidden in the background, may be said to be a vast double chain of relatives mutually complementary. It looks ever in two directions, without and within, above and beneath, before and after.

"We maintain, therefore, that we have positive knowledge of the infinite. Whosoever says that the infinite cannot be known contradicts himself. For he must possess a notion of it before he can deny that he has a positive knowledge of it, before he can predict aught regarding it. And so he says he cannot know what he says, though in another fashion, that he does know. It could never have come within the horizon of hypothetical knowledge, never have become the subject of discussion, unless positively (though inadequately) known; and thus the infinite stands as the antithetic background of the finite."

If by taking the finite "alone" is meant thinking any

phenomena as entirely sole and utterly out of relation to ourselves or any other phenomenon or phenomena, then undoubtedly "the finite if we take it alone is inconceivable;" but if it is meant that an ounce of lead taken alone is as inconceivable as an illimitable number of undefined quantities of undescribed material, then we deny the writer's position. Positive knowledge of the indefinable is a contradiction in terms.

"But," answers the *British Quarterly Review* writer (p. 64), "it is objected that as human knowledge is always finite, we can never have a positive apprehension of an infinite object; that as the subject of knowledge is necessarily finite, its object must be the same. Let us sift this objection.

"I may know an object in itself as related to me the knower, or I may know it in its relation to other objects also known to me the knower. But in both and all cases, knowledge is limited by the power of the knower; therefore, it is always finite knowledge. But it may be finite knowledge of an infinite object, incomplete knowledge of a complete object, partial knowledge of a transcendent object. The boundary or fence may be within the faculty of the knower, while the object he imperfectly grasps may not only be infinite, but be known to transcend his faculties in the very act of conscious knowledge. For example, I may know that a line is infinite, while I have only a finite knowledge of the points along which that line extends. And similarly my knowledge of the Infinite Mind is partial and incomplete, but it is clear and defined. It is a definite knowledge of an indefinite object. We may have a partial knowledge not only of a part, but of the whole. Thus I have a partial knowledge of a circle, because I know only a few of its properties; but it is not to a part of the circle that my partial knowledge extends, but to the whole which I know in part. In like manner, as the Infinite Object has no parts, it is not of a portion of his being that we possess a partial knowledge, but of the whole. We know him as we know the circle, inadequately yet directly, immediately, though in part."

Here again we have a trick of words. I cannot know more of a line than my knowledge "of the points along which that line extends." I may believe there is a beyond; I do not know it, because each point known is an addition to my finite line. Then there is no fair transition in thought from the line finite to the line infinite. The first is think-

able, the second is unthinkable, for one point of the line, being always in reach of the thinker, the line cannot accurately be termed infinite; the knowledge of the thinker limits it in one part, and a limitation of the infinite is, again, a contradiction in terms. Still less can this be urged as evidence of "knowledge of infinite mind," for the last two words are meaningless.

"Again," argues the writer in the *British Quarterly Review* (p. 64), "it is said that to know the infinite is to know the sum of all reality, and as that would include the universe and its source together, it must necessarily include, on the one hand, the knower along with his knowledge, and on the other, all the possibilities of existence. The possibility of our knowing the Infinite Being as distinct from the universe is denied, since infinite existence is said to be co-extensive with the whole universe of things. But that the source of the universe must necessarily exhaust existence, and contain within himself all actual being, is a mere theoretic assumption. The presence of the finite does not limit the infinite, as if the area of the latter were contracted by so much of the former as exists within it. For the relation of the infinite being to the finite is not similar to the relation between infinite space and a segment of it. It is true that so much of finite space is so much cut out of the whole area of infinite space—though, if the remainder is infinite, the portion removed will not really limit it. [First, space is only conceivable as the area of extension of some object, or the measure of distance between two or more objects, or as the area beyond some object. Infinite space is unthinkable, except as the area of extension of some unmeasured object. We cannot, except by a misuse of words, speak of cutting "so much" "out of the *whole* area of infinite space." The word "whole" is definite. The word "infinite" is the equivalent for inability to define.] But as our intuition of the infinite has no resemblance to our knowledge of space, we believe that the relations which their respective objects sustain have no affinity with each other. The intuition of God is a purely spiritual revelation, informing us not of the quantity, but of the quality, of the Supreme Being in the universe. And to affirm that the finite spirit of man standing in a fixed relation to the infinite spirit of God limits it, by virtue of that relation, is covertly to introduce a partial concept into a region to which it is utterly foreign, and which it has no right to enter." But if spiritual knowledge of

God deals with his quality only, and not with his quantity, why should a word be employed to describe him which is usable of quantity only and not of quality? To speak of a spirit as "infinite" does not tell us anything of its quality; it might be good, bad, or indifferent, loving or hating, holy or wicked, and yet, if boundless, would rightly be described as infinite. But, however admirable the quality, the spirit is not infinite unless boundless, not only in our ignorance of its bounds, but in reality. To employ the term *infinite* as though it were an equivalent of *perfect*, is a loose use of words which destroys all accuracy of thought.

"Similarly," continues the Theistic writer of the above *Review*, "with the action of the infinite and absolute cause. The creative energy of that cause is not inconsistent with its changelessness. To say so, is to introduce a quantitative notion into a sphere when quality is alone to be considered. A cause in action is the force which determines the changes which occur in time. But the *primum mobile*, the first cause, need not be itself changed by the forth-putting of its causal power.

"We therefore maintain, in opposition to the teachers of nescience, that a positive knowledge of the infinite is competent to man, because involved in his very consciousness of the finite. And when psychologically analysed, this intuition explains and vindicates itself."

Our answer is, that man has no conception whatever, either innate or acquired, of "infinite God." Thus Sir William Hamilton (in his "Discussions on Philosophy" page 12) says: "The unconditioned is incognisable and inconceivable, its notion being only the negative of the conditioned, which last can alone be positively known or conceived.....The unconditionally unlimited, or the infinite, cannot possibly be construed to the mind."

Mansel says: "To be conscious, we must be conscious of something; and that something can only be known, as that which it is, by being distinguished from that which it is not. But distinction is necessarily limitation; for, if one object is to be distinguished from another, it must possess some form of existence which the other has not, or it must not possess some form which the other has.....A consciousness of the Infinite as such thus necessarily involves a self-contradiction; for it implies the recognition, by limitation and difference, of that which can only be given as unlimited and indifferent. That a man can be conscious of the infi-

nite is thus a supposition which, in the very terms in which it is expressed, annihilates itself. Consciousness is essentially a limitation; for it is the determination of the mind to one actual out of many possible modifications. But the infinite, if it is to be conceived at all, must be conceived as potentially everything and actually nothing; for, if there is anything in general which it cannot become, it is thereby limited; and, if there is anything in particular which it actually is, it is thereby excluded from being any other thing. But, again, it must also be conceived as actually everything and potentially nothing; for an unrealised potentiality is likewise a limitation. If the infinite can be that which it is not, it is by that very possibility marked out as incomplete, and capable of a higher perfection. If it is actually everything, it possesses no characteristic feature by which it can be distinguished from anything else, and discerned as an object of consciousness. This contradiction, which is utterly inexplicable on the supposition that the infinite is a positive object of human thought, is at once accounted for when it is regarded as [or rather admitted to be] the mere negation of thought. If all thought is limitation—if whatever we conceive is, by the very act of conception, regarded as finite—the *infinite*, from a human point of view, is merely a name for the absence of those conditions under which thought is possible. To speak of a *conception of the infinite* is, therefore, at once to affirm those conditions and to deny them. The contradiction which we discover in such a conception is only that which we have ourselves placed there, by tacitly assuming the conceivability of the inconceivable. The condition of consciousness is distinction, and the condition of distinction is limitation. We can have no consciousness of Being in general which is not some Being in particular: a thing, in consciousness, is one thing out of many. In assuming the possibility of an infinite object of consciousness, I assume, therefore, that it is at the same time limited and unlimited—actually something, without which it could not be an object of consciousness, and actually nothing, without which it could not be infinite” (Bampton Lectures, by Dean Mansel, pp. 71—73).

The whole of the foregoing division of Theistic argument is based on the fallacy of innate ideas. Locke, in his “Essay on Understanding,” took plain stand against this fallacy. “If it shall be demanded,” he says, “when a man begins to have any ideas? I think the true answer is, when he first

has any sensation." Lewes, in his "Problems of Life and Mind," vol. i. p. 236, says: "Neither observation nor reflection warrants the supposition that the infant.....has on entering the world innate ideas.....What is innate or connate, is the structure which will react under stimulus in certain definite ways, and these reactions will depend on the degree of development which the structure has acquiredall perception, consequently all conception, is the product of the reaction of the organism stimulated by the cosmos, which is saying in other words that all our knowledge had its origin in experience—the registration of such reactions. And this is further confirmed by the fact that on the one hand the development of the organism has its prescribed course, any interference with the series of successive stages causing another form of structure to result, while, on the other hand, any interference with the normal course of experience will correspondingly affect the result; so that even results, which have the fixed character of instincts, may be frustrated by an interruption of the prescribed course of evolution."

Leaving the pure Theistic argument, we take another phase of the pleading for religion.

Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, born 1692, died 1752, in his famous "Analogy of Religion," has some points which here require notice, rather from the reputation of the writer than for the real merit of his arguments. It must not be forgotten that Butler's "Analogy" is only available in the hands of the orthodox, and for use against persons already believing in a God, for he takes it "for proved that there is an intelligent author of nature and natural governor of the world" (Introduction, p. xxviii.).

Chapter 1 of Part I. of the "Analogy of Religion" treats of a future life, and professes to argue from the analogy of nature. Bishop Butler never says what he means by the word *nature*, and he sometimes uses it in senses inconsistent with the fashion which he gives to it at other times. By nature, as before explained (see page 112), we mean the totality of existence, including in this all actual and past phenomena, all possible phenomena, and all that is or has been necessary for the happening of phenomena. Bishop Butler says, section 1, that "we find it to be a general law of nature" that human beings "should exist in degrees of life, in one period of their being greatly different from those appointed them in another," and adds, "therefore that we

are to exist hereafter in a state as different (suppose from our present) as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature." Here "law of nature" is not defined, but, most clearly, it is not meant to signify merely "observed order of event," which is the definition we should give to it, for Bishop Butler uses the word "appointed," which, read by the light of his assumption "that there is an intelligent author of nature and natural governor," would make "law of nature" equivalent to a commandment issued to nature by this author and governor. The argument fails; the analogy is rather that, as the human being commences, grows, arrives at his prime, decays and finishes, so the death or finish will be the end, as the generation was the beginning. To make any analogy, Bishop Butler ought to show the individual life before the body began, as a ground for presuming the individual life continuing after the body had finished.

In section 2 of the same chapter the Bishop writes: "We know that we are endowed with capacities of action, of happiness, and misery. Now that we have these powers and capacities before death is a presumption that we shall retain them through and after death; indeed a probability of it abundantly sufficient to act upon, unless there be some positive reason to think that death is the destruction of those living powers." This argument would be quite as valid if it ran: "that we have these powers and capacities after birth is a presumption that we possessed them before birth." The words "living powers," in this argument, are loosely substituted for "capacities of action," and two paragraphs later these living powers get changed into "living agents." Giving the Bishop credit for sincerity of intention, these changes of phraseology are most unfortunate, as they obscure the argument and confuse the reader. A bucket has a capacity for holding water; knocking out the bottom of the bucket finishes the capacity; no such capacity belongs to the bottomless pail, and no sane person would think of arguing that the holding capacity was a holding power, or holding agent, enduring after the pail had been knocked to pieces.

The Bishop says that "destruction of living powers is a manner of expression unavoidably ambiguous;" but that it is used in the sense of "the destruction of a living being, so as that the same living being shall be incapable of ever perceiving or acting again at all."

To prevent as far as possible the misapprehension likely

to arise from the repetition of undefined words, we deny any "living powers" other than "life;" and, excluding vegetable life, define life to mean the total normal organic functional activity of each animal—varying in different animals, and varying in the same animal at different dates between its generation and death. The separate individual life commences with the birth, and death is the cessation of life. Dr. Maudsley ("Body and Mind," p. 162), after arguing that vitality is not a special principle but a result, which will be ultimately explainable by operation of so-called molecular forces, says :—"It is desirable to examine into that which is generally deemed to constitute the specialty of life. Now it is certain, when we consider the vast range of vitality, from the simple life of a molecule or cell to the complex life of man, that valid objections may be made to any definition of life. If it be wide enough to comprise all forms, it will be too vague to have any value; if narrow enough to be exact, it will exclude the most lowly forms. The problem is, to investigate the conditions of the manifestation of life. A great fault in many attempted definitions has been the description of life as a resistance or complete contrast to the rest of nature, which was supposed to be continually striving to destroy it. But the elements of organic matter are not different from those of the inorganic, whence they are derived, and to which they return; and the chemical and mechanical forces of these elements cannot be suspended or removed within the organism. What is special is the manner of composition of the elements; there is a concurrence of manifold substances, and they are combined or grouped together in a very complex way. Such union or grouping is, however, only a further advance upon, and by no means a contrast to, the kind of combination which is met with in inorganic bodies. Life is not a contrast to non-living nature, but a further development of it. The more knowledge advances, the more plainly is it shown that there are physical and chemical processes upon which life depends. Heat is produced by combustion in the organism, as it is in the fire; starch is converted into sugar there, as it is in the chemical laboratory; urea, which is so constant a product of the body's chemistry, can be formed artificially by the chemist; and the process of excitation in a nerve, on the closure of a constant stream, appears to be analogous to the process of electrolysis, in which hydrogen is given off at the negative pole. The peculiarity of life is the complexity of combina-

tion in so small a space, the intimate operation of many simultaneously acting forces in the microcosm of the organic cell."

An anonymous writer says: "Life is that state of an organised body in which all the organs concerned perform their individual and collective functions. Health is that state of an organised body in which *all* the organs perform their individual and collective functions, and perform them well. Disease is that state of an organised body in which one or more of the organs fail to perform their functions, or to perform them well. Death is that state of an organised body in which all the organs of life cease to perform the functions of life" ("Biology *versus* Theology," No. 6).

Unfortunately, Bishop Butler not only refrains from any definition, but uses the words "living powers" and "living agents," without regard to accuracy. With him "living agent" is repeated, without any proof, as if it were an identifiable spiritual entity. On this point Dr. Maudsley well puts it: "The burden of proving that the *Deus ex machinâ* of a spiritual entity intervenes somewhere, and where it intervenes, clearly lies upon those who make the assertion, or who need the hypothesis. They are not justified in arbitrarily fabricating an hypothesis entirely inconsistent with experience of the orderly development of nature, which even postulates a domain of nature that human senses cannot take any cognisance of, and in then calling upon those who reject their assumption to disprove it" ("Body and Mind," p. 162).

A confusion more complete, arising from the loose use of words, is even found in the same section (2) of Butler's "Analogy," when the Bishop, arguing for the presumption of continuance, says: "It seems our only reason for believing that any one substance now existing will continue to exist a moment longer—the self-existent substance only excepted." This assumes, without any proof, that there are several substances, and that there is one substance distinguishable from the others as "the self-existent." Probably the Bishop used the words, "any one substance," relatively, of phenomena, but he says nothing to that effect; and his "self-existent substance" is either the "intelligent author of nature," or exists besides nature and its author.

The apprehension of death, as the end of living, "must arise," we are told, "either from the reason of the thing, or from the analogy of nature."

“But,” says Bishop Butler, “we cannot argue, from the reason of the thing, that death is the destruction of living agents, because we know not at all what death is in itself, but only some of its effects, such as the dissolution of flesh, skin, and bones ; and these effects do in nowise appear to imply the destruction of a living agent.” A billiard ball rolls, a man lives ; break the billiard ball perfectly in half, neither of the halves will roll ; knock off the man’s head, he cannot live. Just as there is no “rolling agent” other than the striker and his cue, so there is no living agent other than the food and necessary sustenance for the living man. As an argument from analogy, Bishop Butler’s is worthless.

The Bishop further urges that “sleep, or a swoon, shows us that not only these (living) powers exist when they are not exercised, as the passive power of motion does in inanimate matter, but shows also that they exist when there is no present capacity of exercising them ; or that the capacity of exercising them for the present, as well as the actual exercise of them, may be suspended, and yet the powers themselves remain undestroyed.” Life is not suspended in sleep ; and the analogy here is utterly wanting. In a perfect swoon there is no consciousness, but there is not suspended vitality ; the person in the swoon continues to live, although the activity of some of the functions is suspended.

“Nor,” says the Bishop, “can we find anything through the whole analogy of nature to afford us even the slightest presumption that animals ever lose their *living powers* ; much less, if it were possible, that they lose them by death ; for we have no faculties wherewith to trace any beyond or through it, so as to see what becomes of them.” If for the two words italicised the word “life” be substituted, as it ought properly to be, for no living powers have been shown other than life, then the utter nonsense of the Bishop’s position becomes apparent. Go into a slaughter-house, and watch the butcher. Is there no presumption that the oxen, calves, and sheep he slaughters lose their lives ? Oh ! answers Bishop Butler, death “destroys the sensible proof which we had before their death of their being possessed of living powers, but does not appear to afford the least reason to believe that they are then, or by that event, deprived of them. And our knowing that they were possessed of these powers up to the very period to which we have faculties

capable of tracing them is itself a probability of their retaining them beyond it."

"All presumption," says the Bishop, "of death's being the destruction of living beings must go upon the supposition that they are compounded, and so discernible. But, since consciousness is a single and indivisible power, it should seem that the subject in which it resides must be so too." "Consciousness" is used by Bishop Butler as identical with "perception;" and "perceptive power" is used at meaning "the power of consciousness;" and "the subject in which it resides" is termed "the conscious being." In truth, consciousness is a varying quantity, being the sum of our remembered perceptions, and of our thinkings on such perceptions. On this question of consciousness Lewes says ("Biog. Hist. of Philosophy," vol. i., p. 369): "Perception is nothing more than a state of the percipient—*i.e.*, a state of consciousness. This state may be occasioned by some external cause, and may be as complex as the cause is complex; but it is still nothing more than a state of consciousness—an effect produced by an adequate cause. Of every change in our sensation we are conscious, and in time we learn to give definite names and forms to the causes of these changes. But in the fact of consciousness there is nothing beyond consciousness. In our perceptions we are conscious only of the changes which have taken place within us: we can never transcend the sphere of our own consciousness; we can never go out of ourselves, and become aware of the objects which caused these changes. All we can do is to identify certain external appearances with certain internal changes—*e.g.*, to identify the appearance we name 'fire' with certain sensations we have known to follow our being placed near it. Turn the fact of consciousness how we will, we can see nothing in it but the change of a sentient being operated by some external cause. Consciousness is no mirror of the world; it gives no faithful reflection of things as they are *per se*; it only gives a faithful report of its own modification as excited by external things."

Having thus affirmed "a single and indivisible power," and asserted that "it is as easy to conceive that we may exist out of bodies as in them," Bishop Butler goes on:—"We see by experience, that men may lose their limbs, their organs of sense, and even the greatest part of their bodies, and yet remain the same living agents. And persons can trace up the existence of themselves to a time

when the bulk of their bodies was extremely small, in comparison with what it is in mature age ; and we cannot but think that they might then have lost a considerable part of that small body, and yet have remained the same living agents, as they may now lose great part of their present body and remain so." First, it is not true that the "life" continues, or has continued, the same. "Life" is increased with the growth from babyhood, and is diminished by every diminution of body. Although it may be difficult to estimate the change in thinking-ability consequent on the loss of "any organ of sense," yet, as perceptive ability is certainly the foundation of all consciousness, injury must necessarily result to consciousness from loss of organs of perception. It is not true that men lose their spines, their heads, or their hearts, and continue to live at all ; yet Bishop Butler goes on to say, "We have already, several times over, lost a great part, or perhaps the whole, of our body, according to certain common established laws of nature, yet we remain the same living agents ; when we shall lose as great a part, or the whole, by another common established law of nature, death, why may we not also remain the same." It will, of course, be replied that the Bishop does not mean a total sudden loss, but a gradual change. In truth, with his usual looseness of expression, the Bishop applies "lose" to a limb, meaning that the limb is totally and suddenly lost, while in the same sentence the word "lose" only expresses extremely slow and almost imperceptible change in the whole body. Dr. Maudsley says ("Body and Mind," page 127.) : "When we are told that every part of the body is in a constant state of change, that within a certain period every particle of it is renewed, and yet that amidst these changes a man feels that he remains essentially the same, we perceive nothing inconsistent with the idea of the action of a material organ ; for it is not absurd to suppose that in the brain the new series of particles take the pattern of those which they replace, as they do in other organs and tissues which are continually changing their substance yet preserve their identity. Even the scar of a wound on the finger is not often effaced, but grows as the body grows ; why, then, assume the necessity of an immaterial principle to prevent the impression of an idea from being lost?"

In the second chapter Bishop Butler nominally deals with the government of God by rewards and punishments ;

and he maintains that "the whole analogy of nature, the whole present course of things, most fully shows that there is nothing incredible in the general doctrine of religion, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter; nothing incredible, I mean, arising out of the notion of rewarding and punishing, for the whole course of nature is a present instance of His exercising that government over us, which implies in it rewarding and punishing."

The argument on the Bishop's assumption "that there is an intelligent author of nature and natural governor of the world" is only maintainable by ignoring a whole series of contradictions. Punishment is only justifiable as a deterrent from future vicious conduct; but, according to the Bishop, the punishment is to come when there is no longer any possibility of continued vicious conduct. The punishment is not for "the government of the world," but is simply vengeance for past conduct. If God is "governor," either all acts result from his government, or there are some which occur in spite of it. In the last case he is not omnipotent, and in the first case the act is not one that ought to be punished. The Bishop strives to meet this and similar objections by urging (Part I., cap. 7) that analogy "makes it credible that his (God's) moral government must be a scheme quite beyond our comprehension." But, surely, the utter incomprehensibility of a scheme ought not to be urged as a ground for its acceptance. See on the question of punishment Emile de Girardin's "Droit de Punir," and Jeremy Bentham's works especially.

The theory of government by rewards and punishments is very vaguely stated by Bishop Butler. "Pain," as the "consequence" of certain actions, seems to be regarded by the Bishop as arranged by God; but pain may be incurred in doing a good action. A courageous man breaks his collar bone in rescuing some people from that which, without his interference, would have been almost certain death. According to the theory of Bishop Butler, the pain of the broken collar bone is a punishment knowingly inflicted by the intelligent author of nature on the brave rescuer. In chapter 6 the Bishop treats of "necessity as influencing practice," and as this seems inseparable from the problem of punishment, we here give, with slight modification, two extracts from John Stuart Mill—one on Freewill, the other on Punishment—first remarking that Necessitarianism and Fatalism are no co-equivalent terms. The Fatalist says what is, is,

and must be, could not have been otherwise, and cannot be altered. The Necessitarian says what is, is, and must have resulted from such and such conditions ; but the conditions might have been varied, and the results would then have been different :—

“ What experience makes known is the fact of an invariable sequence between every event and some special combination of antecedent conditions—in such sort that, wherever and whenever that union of antecedents exists, the event does not fail to occur. Any *must* in the case, any necessity, other than the unconditional universality of the fact we know nothing of.

“ Now, the so-called Necessitarians demand the application of the same rule of judgment to our volitions. They maintain that there is the same evidence for it. They affirm, as a truth of experience, that volitions do, in point of fact, follow determinate antecedents with the same uniformity, and (when we have sufficient knowledge of the circumstances) with the same certainty as other effects follow their causes ” (“ Examination of Sir W. Hamilton,” p. 561).

“ The feeling of liability to punishment is of two kinds. It may mean expectation that, if we act in a certain manner, punishment will actually be inflicted upon us by our fellow-creatures or by a Supreme Power. Or it may only mean, knowing that we shall deserve that infliction.

“ The first of these cannot, in any correct meaning of the term, be designated as a consciousness. If we believe that we shall be punished for doing wrong, it is because the belief has been taught to us by our parents and tutors, or by our religion, or is generally held by those who surround us, or because we have ourselves come to the conclusion by reasoning, or from the experience of life. This is not consciousness. And, by whatever name it is called, its evidence is not dependent on any theory of the spontaneity of volition. The punishment of guilt in another world is believed with undoubting conviction by Turkish Fatalists and by professed Christians, who are not only Necessitarians, but believe that the majority of mankind were divinely predestined from all eternity to sin, and to be punished for sinning. It is not, therefore, the belief that we shall be *made* accountable, which can be deemed to require or presuppose the freewill hypothesis ; it is the belief that we ought so to be ; that we are justly accountable ; that guilt deserves punishment ” (p. 571).

“The real question is one of justice—the legitimacy of retribution or punishment. On the theory of necessity, we are told, a man cannot help acting as he does ; and it cannot be just that he should be punished for what he cannot help. Not if the expectation of punishment enables him to help it, and is the only means by which he can be enabled to help it?

“To say that he cannot help it is true or false, according to the qualification with which the assertion is accompanied. Supposing him to be of a vicious disposition, he cannot help doing the criminal act, if he is allowed to believe that he will be able to commit it unpunished. If, on the contrary, the impression is strong on his mind that a heavy punishment will follow, he can, and in most cases does, help it.

“The question deemed to be so puzzling is, how punishment can be justified, if men's actions are determined by motives, among which motives punishment is one. A more difficult question would be, how it can be justified if they are not so determined? Punishment proceeds on the assumption that the will is governed by motives. If punishment had no power of acting on the will, it would be illegitimate, however natural might be the inclination to inflict it. Just so far as the will is supposed free—that is, capable of acting *against* motives—punishment is disappointed of its object and deprived of its justification.

“There are two ends which, on the Necessitarian theory, are sufficient to justify punishment: the benefit of the offender himself, and the protection of others. The first justifies it, because to benefit a person cannot be to do him an injury. To punish him for his own good, provided the inflictor has any proper title to constitute himself a judge, is no more unjust than to administer medicine. As far, indeed, as respects the criminal himself, the theory of punishment is that, by counterbalancing the influence of present temptations or acquired bad habits, it restores the mind to that normal preponderance of the love of right which many moralists and theologians consider to constitute the true definition of our freedom. In its other aspect, punishment is a precaution taken by society in self-defence. To make this just, the only condition required is, that the end which society is attempting to enforce by punishment should be a just one. Used as a means of aggression by society on the just rights of the individual, punishment is unjust. Used to protect the just rights of others against unjust aggression

by the offender, it is just. If it is possible to have just rights (which is the same thing as to have rights at all), it cannot be unjust to defend them. Freewill or no freewill, it is just to punish so far as is necessary for this purpose, as it is just to put a wild beast to death (without unnecessary suffering) for the same object" (p. 578).

A writer in the *Westminster Review* for April, 1876, p. 459, says :—" Punishment, as a human institution, is warranted by our very helplessness, by the inability in which we are of producing, otherwise than through the infliction of suffering, that mental change in an offender which alone can render him compatible with the existence of his fellow creatures. But what ground shall we assign for punishment when we suppose it inflicted by a Deity? Granting all the previous difficulties solved, putting aside the question of the origin of evil, putting aside the hypothesis of a creator, still more so of an omnipotent creator, and considering the Deity simply as a ruler, what reason would he have for instituting suffering? Does he institute it in his own defence, or solely in the interest of transgressors? On either supposition the end might be secured by better means. The infliction of punishment is regarded as a defect, even by our poor human educators; their business is to govern by developing the sympathies, by moral suasion, by the influence of high example, and in proportion as they fail in this, they give the measure of their incapacity. How much more, then, must severity be discreditable to a Deity? If our penal legislators find that it is possible to reform criminals, even when taken at maturity, if the progress of our civilisation has been marked by a progressive mildness in our codes, and if the duration of each penalty is being made, as far as possible, dependent on the offender's own behaviour, must we not expect a policy benigner still from God, who has the moulding of his charges from their earliest hour, and who can act directly on their minds? If, with such an expectation, we turn to Christianity, our disappointment will indeed be great. Not one of God's punishments is educational; all have the character of wanton ferocity. They are neither made to depend on the offender's subsequent behaviour, nor do they exhibit any proportionality to the transgression; the code of providence is infinitely worse than Draco's, since even death is not allowed to put an end to the transgressor's sufferings. Adam, having sinned once, is punished

for ever ; and as the punishment is maximum, whatever subsequent disobedience Adam may commit, he cannot deserve worse than eternal damnation. We might at least imagine that if this first infliction is not intended as a check on Adam's conduct, it is intended as a check on his descendants. Not at all, the maximum penalty is pronounced for Adam's sin on his descendants also ! We shall pursue no further ; the exposition of such a scheme as this is an outrage on the reader's understanding."

In chapter 3 Bishop Butler says :—" When we speak of God's natural government of the world, it implies government of the very same kind with that which a master exercises over his servant, or a civil magistrate over his subjects." Surely there is no analogy here, the master does not create his servant, the civil magistrate is neither omniscient nor omnipotent. The subject may rebel to overthrow the civil governor ; the servant may escape from the control of the master. Does Bishop Butler mean that any similar contingencies are conceivable of God and his creatures ? But adds Bishop Butler :—" This alone does not appear, at first sight, to determine anything certainly concerning the moral character of the author of nature, considered in this relation of governor, does not ascertain his government to be moral, or to prove that he is the righteous judge of the world. Moral government consists, not barely in rewarding and punishing men for their actions, which the most tyrannical person may do ; but in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked ; in rendering to men according to their actions, considered as good or evil. And the perfection of moral government consists in doing this, with regard to all intelligent creatures, in an exact proportion to their personal merits or demerits.'

One answer alone is needed to this, viz., that in no sense can the award of " eternal torment " be considered as " in an exact proportion to the offence for which it is the punishment."

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